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SPORTS

Winchester girls volleyball sweeps the first six matches of the year in dominating fashion

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

September 26, 2025 . 6:00 AM — 3 min read

Winchester High volleyball captain Johanna Melhorn, the team's middle blocker, slams the ball back to Melrose during the Sept. 16 matchup. Her teammates Karen Huai, Kaiyal Kumaran, Hazel Lovins, Maddie Crooks and Defne Mergen back her up. COURTESY PHOTO/ALLI GAIKO

Coach John Fleming's girls volleyball team (6-0) has been nothing sensational in the early going this year.

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The Red & Black have had six matches so far, and have been perfect in all of them. They specifically had wins over Wilmington, Arlington, Stoneham, Woburn, Melrose and Lexington, all by 3-0 final scores.

The Winchester girls opened up the home season against the Wilmington Wildcats at the McCall Middle School on Sept. 3.

Julia Campo led the way with six aces, while both Bella Comes and Hazel Lovins chipped in with five each.

“It was nice to see everyone get an opportunity to play, and make the most of it,” said Fleming. “Nora (Harstad), Libby (Melkonian) and Liv (Thompson) all had multiple kills. Overall, it was just a great way to start the season.”

Winchester High volleyball junior outside hitter Maddie Crooks skies high to get the ball over her Melrose counterparts during a match on Sept. 16. Captain Johanna Melhorn, the middle blocker, is alongside her for support, while Kaiyal Kumaran, Hazel Lovins, Defne Mergen and Karen Huai watch the play develop in back. COURTESY PHOTO/ALLI GAIKO

Winchester was then at Arlington to face the Spy Ponders on Sept. 5.

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"It was a good road win," said Fleming. "I thought we slowed down their top hitters, but as a team they blocked well, and were also scrappy. But for us, Johanna (Melhorn) was terrific in the middle with four aces and 14 kills [to pace the attack]."

Lovins was close behind Melhorn with 12 kills. Kaiyal Kumaran and Campo did a nice job splitting the libero duties to help lead their teammates to another win, according to Fleming. Defne Mergen accounted for 30 assists.

The Red & Black were still on the road, when they visited Woburn to go up against the Tanners on Sept. 11.

"Woburn is well-coached, and they gave us a tough time," said Fleming, "but I think our girls did a nice job of digging deep, when we fell behind in the first set. We played better as the match progressed, which was nice to see."

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Mergen was the leader of the pack in this match with 6 aces and 27 assists. Lovins produced 14 kills, followed by Melhorn with nine and Maddie Crooks with seven. Campo was credited with nine digs.

Melrose was next up to square off against the Winchester girls at the McCall School on Sept. 16.

"Melrose has been one of the top teams in the state over the years, but our serving was too much for them in this match," said Fleming. "Those serves really disrupted their offense."

Fleming said that having four girls with four-plus aces against a g
like Melrose is very impressive. Crooks led the way with five aces,

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by Karen Huai, Melhorn and Mergen with four each. Lovins and Melhorn were the leaders in kills with 19 and 11, respectively.

The Winchester girls closed out last week against Lexington on Sept. 18. They have since been on a well-deserved break, savoring these dominating wins, while also getting ready for Reading this week at home on Sept. 25.

Fleming had this to say about Lexington: “They fought really hard, and were really good defensively, but Hazel (Lovins) had her best hitting performance of the year with 20 kills, while Maddie (Crooks) had a great run of serves in this match to help give us another win.”

Karen Huai (4 kills), Crooks (7 aces, 10 digs) and Kumaran (6 digs) also contributed to another convincing triumph, before the midseason break.

After the aforementioned Reading matchup, non-league Brookline comes to McCall on Friday (Sept. 26) to face the Red & Black in a non-league matchup, starting at 5:30 p.m. They will then hit the road for Belmont on Monday (Sept. 29) to go up against the Marauders, before heading to the Cape to meet up with non-league Barnstable the very next day. Both matches will also begin at 5:30 p.m.

The team will remain on the road to close out another week, while beginning a new month against host Wakefield on Friday (Oct. 3) at 6 p.m.

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Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in [illegible] iconic production is sure to [illegible] audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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